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Panther Sports News

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHARLESTON, IL--Only three fulltime starters return for Eastern Illinois University's 1983-84 wrestling team but first year coach Ralph McCausland says, "We're going to be a strong dual meet team."

McCausland, a former EIU national champ who has been coaching in suburban Chicago high schools the past three years, replaces his teacher, Ron Clinton, who moved on to the University of Illinois.

The Panthers open the season at the Michigan State Invitational, an open meet on Saturday and Sunday (Nov. 12-13). The first home meet is Tuesday, Dec. 6 against SIU-Edwardsville, a NCAA II power and one of three dual teams to beat EIU last year.

"We're going to be tough to beat if we stay healthy. Right now we don't have depth at the lower weights but we're like a big comb . . . the more weights we move up the stronger we get."

Only three legitimate starters are back. They are senior Bernie Ruettiger (Joliet-Providence), who wrestled at 134 last year but will likely move up to 142, junior Dan Sanko (Round Lake-Grant) at 158 and senior heavyweight Duane Clark (Shell Rock, IA-Waldorf JC).

Clark is the only returning wrestler with any major honors placing fifth in the NCAA Western Regional, where the team also took fifth. He finished with an 18-6 record.

Sanko, injured most of the season, was 13-7-1 and Bernie Ruettiger ended up 8-7-3. His younger brother, Mark, is expected to flourish as a starter at 134 with Bernie going at 142.

"I think we have a lot of talent coming along . . . particularly in the sophomore class," says McCausland. "Tom Vickers (Lake Villa-Grant) (slotted at 126 in place of graduated all-american Derek Porter) is very smooth on his feet and now will have a chance to show it."

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"I don't see many stopping Mark Ruettiger. He's solid all the way through."

Clark is a challenger for honors on the national level after placing in the regional.

"I think he was a bit disappointed last year but we expect him to finish strong. Quite a few people he wrestled got Division I honors, and he now sees he can achieve something this year."

A 300 plus pounder, Clark does have another legitimate heavyweight, Jim Fink, to work out with in practice. "It's normally difficult for a big man to get a good workout, or stronger, but Fink will push him and Geno (Savegnago, former 190 all-american) comes in to wrestle him," McCausland said.

Like his predecessor, Ron Clinton, who directed the Panthers to national recognition, McCausland believes in "motion and movement on your feet . . . sting, jab and deflect.

"Right now we're also stressing conditioning quite a bit. We want to hold down injuries . . . it's too early to start vigorous training."

The season does not conclude until the NCAA championship in early March.

1983 WRESTLING SCHEDULE

Sat.-Sun., Nov. 12-13	at Michigan State Invitational	Lansing, MI
Fri.-Sat., Nov. 18-19	at St. Louis Open	Forest Park, MO
Wed., Nov. 23	at Tenn-Chattanooga	Chattanooga, TN
Fri., Nov. 25	at Southern Open	Chattanooga, TN
Fri.-Sat., Dec. 2-3	at Illinois Open	Champaign, IL
Tues., Dec. 6 (7:30)	SIU-EDWARDSVILLE	Lantz Gym
Fri.-Sat., Dec. 29-30	at Midlands Tournament	Evanston, IL
Tues., Jan. 10 (7:30)	at Indiana University	Bloomington, IN
Fri., Jan. 13 (7:30)	NORTHERN ILLINOIS	Lantz Gym
Sat., Jan. 14 (1:30)	CENTRAL MISSOURI	Lantz Gym
Tues., Jan. 17 (7:30)	at Southern Illinois-Edwardsville	Edwardsville, IL
Thurs., Jan. 19 (7:30)	at Southwest Missouri	Springfield, MO
Fri.-Sat., Jan. 20-21	at Southwest Missouri Tournament	
Sat., Jan. 28	at Redskin Open	Miami, OH
Thurs., Feb. 2 (7:30)	at Illinois State	Normal, IL
Sun., Feb. 5 (2:00)	ILLINOIS	Lantz Gym
Sun., Feb. 19 (2:00)	MISSOURI	Lantz Gym
Fri.-Sat., Feb. 24-25	NCAA Midwest Regional	Terre Haute, IN
Thurs.-Sat., Mar. 8-10	NCAA National Championship	Meadowland, NJ